CHAPTER XXIII-Continued. -15-

she, sagely. "It isn't the way with tune. men. It may not have been love that body are quite two different-"

"Gad, you are analyzing things!" he exclaimed in amazement

are going to Vienna and in St. Stein St. Stephen's we are to be married. a word. She will not be there. She is not asked Isn't it the refinement of-cruelty?"

loser. She hasn't squealed once."

"Squealed? I hate that word." "But seriously, it knocks me all out not wasted on the young man. whenever I think of her. I've hesitated about speaking to father, dear. You see, I'm in rather a delicate posi-I'd give more than that to see this whole unhappy business patched up so that they could start off anew. But I'm afraid he wouldn't take it well from me if I asked him to include her in the er-party. It's his affair, not be able to understand things better mine, you see. He'd be justified in than I. I fell in love with her once considering me selfish in the matter. It might seem as though I didn't care overpowered me. There was some a hang for his personal feelings and-'

"She's his wife, however," said lips. "She didn't wrong him and, after was-is gone. It can never return. in the hearts of two of the voyagers. all, she's only guilty of-well, she isn't | She is not the same. Yvonne is Theguilty of anything except being a sister of the girl he wronged."

I'll have a talk with him if you think best," said he, an eager gleam in his eyes.

"And I with Yvonne," she said quickly. "You see, it's possible she is the one to be persuaded."

"He'll never ask her," said Frederic. after a long period of reflection. "What is to become of her?" asked

Lydia, rather bleakly. "I suppose she'll go away. It will

be the end." "I-I don't think I could bear it.

Freddy," she said, a trace of tears in her voice

his throat briskly. "Of course you've the same." observed that they never see one another alone. They never meet except when someone else is about. He rather resents the high-handed way in which she ordered him to stay away from me until I was safely out of danger. He hard. You-" has spoken of it to me, but, for the tife of me I can't tell whether he holds it up against her or not. He says she dark with pain. saved my life. He says she per uttered a word of thanks or gratitude subject." or appreciation to her. I'm sure of that, for she has told me so. And she is satisfied to go without his thanks. She rather likes him the better for the way he treats the situation. There's use shamming, Lyddy."

"I see what you mean," she said, with a sigh. "I suppose we just can't understand things."

"You've no idea how beautiful you are today, Lyddy," he said suddenly, eyes with a smile of ineffable happiness. Her hand found his and her palm in a hot, impassioned kiss. "It's great to be alive! Great!"

"Oh, it is," she cried, "it is!" They might better have said that

what it all came to in the analysis. Later on Brood joined them in the courtyard. He stood, with his hand lessly about the coming voyage, all the while smiling upon the radiant fooling me to-" girl to whom he was promising paradise. She adored the gentle, kindly gleam in these one-time steady, steellike eyes. His voice, too, of late was pitched in a softer key and there was the ring of happiness in its every note. It was as if he had discovered something in life that was constantly surprising and pleasing him. He fresh fields of exploration and finding | me thatthere something that was of inestiday he was growing richer, happierand yet poorer when it came to selfappraisement. All his life he had applied to self. He had laid by a great store of hard things for his old | an. age: they were being wrested from him by this new force that had taken ssion of him and he saw how appraised himself very lowly and with | way?" an ever-increasing shame. Rick, how-

ever, was he in humility, conscience, remorse; on these three treasures he "And I'm not so sure of that," said laid the foundation for his new for-

He spoke of the morrow without the he felt for the physical Yvonne, but it faintest indication in his manner that wasn't Matilde that he held in his it was to bring a crisis in his own afarms. You can't get around that, nor fairs. His brow was clear, his eye can be. Matilde's soul and Yvonne's sparkling, his serenity undisturbed. If there was a thought in his mind of Yvonne he did not betray it by a single outward manifestation. His in-"But, all this is neither here nor terest was centered in the two young Frederic, but-la, la! What are we it now, James. But as sure as there there," she said, flushing. "The point people and their immediate future. It is this: we are going away tomorrow, would have been easy to believe, as for heaven knows how long-you and he stood there chatting gayly, that I, my mother and your father. We there was no one else in all the world so far as he was concerned. Quite phen's cathedral-where your father casually he expressed regret that poor and mother were married with poor old Dawes and Riggs were to be left In a way, I am made over, too. I am not Matilde I loved when I held you little Therese as one of the witnesses- | behind, but of Yvonne not so much as

Lydia was something of a diplomato come with us. She is barred out. tist. She left father and son after a few minutes, excusing herself on the "Cruelty, Lydia? I'd hardly call it ground that she wished to have a good. that. It's the order of destiny, or long chat with Yvonne. She did not something of the sort. She gambled delay her departure, but hurried into with fate and lost out. She's a good the house, having rather adroitly provided Frederic with an opening for an intercession in behalf of his lovely "I hate squealer worse," said he. stepmother. Her meaning glance was

He lost no time in following up the advantage. "See here, father, I don't like the idea of leaving Yvonne out in tion. Six weeks ago I was madly in the cold, so to speak. It's—it's pretty fatuated with Yvonne. I don't deny darned rough, don't you think? Down it—and he knows all about it. Gad, in your heart you don't blame her for I'd give ten years of my life if she what she started out to do, and after were going along with us tomorrow. all she's only human. Whatever happened in the past we-well, it's all in the past. She-"

Brood stopped him with an imperative gesture. "My son, I will try to explain something to you. You may because an influence that was her own thing of your mother in her. She admits that to be true and I now believe Lydia, with a stubborn pursing of the it. Well, that something—whatever it rese. She is not the woman I loved two months ago. She-'

"Nor am I the boy you hated two months ago," argued Frederic. "Isn't there a parallel to be seen there, father? I am your son. She is your wife. You-"

"There never was a time when I really hated you, my son. I tried tobut that is all over. We will not rake up the ashes. As for my wife-well, I have tried to hate her. It is impossible for me to do so. She is a wonderful woman. But you must understand on the other hand that I do not love her. I did when she looked at me with your mother's eyes and spoke to me with He swallowed hard. Then he cleared your mother's lips. But-she is not

"Give yourself a chance, dad."

"A chance? What do you mean?" "Just this: You will come to love her for herself if only you will let go and then strode quickly toward his of yourself. You are trying to be wife.

Again Brood interrupted, His face had gone very pale and his eyes grew

"You don't know what you are sayformed a miracle. But he has never ing, Frederic. Let us discontinue the "I want you to be happy-I want-"

"I shall be happy. I am happy. Have I not found out the truth? Are you not my beloved son? Are-"

"And who convinced you of all that, no hypocrisy about him. There's no sir? Who is responsible for your pres

ent happiness-and mine?" "I know, I know," exclaimed the fa ther in some agitation.

"You'll regret it all your life if you fall her now, dad. Why, hang it all. you're not an old man. You are less and she looked up into his glowing than fifty. Your heart hasn't dried up yet. Your blood is still hot. And she is if I had-" glorious. Give yourself a chance. You warm, red lips were pressed to its know that she's one woman in a million, and-she's yours! She has made anything of you." you happy-she can make you still

happier." "No, I am not ola. I am far younger it is great to be young, for that is than I was fifteen years ago. That's what I am afraid of-this youth I really never possessed till now. If I gave thought of anger. You have stood by way to it now I'd-well, I would be me in time of trouble. I owe a great on his son's shoulder, chatting care like putty in her hands. She could go on laughing at me, trifling with me,

> "She wouldn't do that!" exclaimed his son hotly.

"I don't blame you for defending her. It's right that you should. I, too, defend her in a way. You are forgetting the one important condition, however. She has a point of view of her own, my son. She can never reconcile herself to the position you would put seemed always to be venturing into her in if I permitted you to persuade

"I can tell you one thing, father, mable value to his new estate. Every that you ought to know-if you are so blind that you haven't discovered it for yourself. She loves you."

"My son, you are dealing with hoarded the motives and designs that graver mystery than you can possibly to steady herself against the door. suspect-the secret heart of a wom

"Well, I'm sure of it, father-I am absolutely sure of it."

"You speak of giving myself a illy he had invested his powers. He chance. Why do you put it in that

things, father, because you never gave to them."

yourself a real, honest chance. I-" "We'd better drop the subject, Frederic," said Brood, an abrupt change in in her own. "Suppose that I should his manner. "There is nothing more refuse to abide by your-what shall I to be said. Matters have shaped them- call it?" selves. We will not attempt to alter them. I cannot reconstruct myself in grimly. a day, my boy. And now, let us talk of Lydia. She-

"All right, but bear this in mind:

you like.'

Lydia had as little success in her rather more tactful interview with Yvonne. The incomprehensible creature, comfortably ensconced in the have intended to do ever since I disgreat library couch, idly blew rings of covered that I could think for myself smoke toward the ceiling and as idly and not for Matilde. I intend to stay the ship sailed. It contains this ver- the stones. Eats like a soldier, laughs disposed of her future in so far as it here until you curn me out as unwor- dict in writing. He will hand it to you, like a kid, and I'll bet she sleeps like applied to the immediate situation. Everything has turned out as it should. | that. I shall go on caring for you all

foiled and virtue triumphs. Don't be you this in the hope that you will say unhappy on my account, Lydia. It will that you have a spark of love in your not be easy to say good-by to you and soul for me. I don't want you to say to do? Now, please don't speak of it is a God above us you will say it to me again. Hearts are easily mended, one day, and I will be justified in my Look at my husband-ai-e! He has own heart." had his heart made over from top to but it's as good as new, you'll admit. had for you-I know it now. It was happier than I've ever been in my life. in my arms. I know it now for the I'm in love with my husband, I'm in first time. I am a man. I loved youlove with you and Frederic and I am I loved your body, your soulmore than ever in love with myself. very kind to me before I die."

thought that she had solved its meaning and her heart was sore.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

"I Cannot Come to Him."

The next day came, bright and make it for one who looked aloft. But eyes are not always turned toward day is bleak.

The ship was to sail at noon.

At ten o'clock the farewells were be ing said. There were tears and heartaches-and there was flerce rebellion Yvonne had declined to go to the pier am beginning to take myself into acto see them off and Brood was going away without a word to her about the future! That was manifest to the anxious, soul-tried watchers. In silence they made their way out to the waiting automobile. As Brood was about to pass through the broad front door, a resolute figure confronted him. For a moment master and man stared hard into each other's eyes, and then, as if obeying an inflexible command. the former turned to glance backward into the hallway. Yvonne was standing in the library door.

"Sahib!" said the Hindu, and there was strange authority in his voice "Tell her, sahib. It is not so cruel to tell her as it would be to go away with out a word. She is waiting to be told that you do not want her to remain in your home."

Brood closed his eyes for a second,

"Yvonne, they all want me to take you along with us," he said, his voice shaking with the pent-up emotion of

She met his gaze calmly, almost serenely. "But of course, it is quite impossible," she said. "I understand. James."

"It is not possible," he said, steadying his voice with an effort.

"That is why I thought it would be better to say good-by here and not at the pier. We must have some respect for appearances, you know." She was absolutely unmoved.

He searched her eyes intently, look ing for some sign of weakening on her part. He did not know whether to feel disappointed or angry at what he saw. "I don't believe you would have gone

"You need not say it, James. You did not ask me, and I have not asked

"Before I go," he said nervously. "I want to say this to you: I have no feeling of resentment toward you. I am able to look back upon what you would have done without a single deal to you, Yvonne. You will not accept my gratitude-it would be a farce to offer it to you under the circumstances. But I want you to know that I am grateful. You-

"Go on, please. This is the psychological moment for you to say that your home cannot be mine. I am expecting "L"

He straightened up and his eyes hardened. "I shall never say that to you, Yvonne. You are my wife. I shall expect you to remain my wife to the very end."

Now, for the first time, her eyes flew open with surprise. A bewildered expression came into them almost at once. He had said the thing she least expected. She put out her hand "Do-do you mean that, James?"

she said wonderingly

"You are my property. You are bound to me. I do not intend that you part." shall ever forget that, Yvonne. I don't believe you really love me, but that's what it will come to," she "Because it's the truth," proclaimed have not loved their husbands and yet all that time?"

his son. "You've missed a good many -yet they have been true and loyal

"You-you amaze me." she cried. watching his eyes with acute wonder

"Decision is the word," he supplied

"Well-what then?"

"You will abide by it, that's all. am leaving you behind without the Lydia loves Yvonne, and she's heart- slightest fear for the future. This is broken. Now we'll talk about her, if your home. You will not abandon it." "Have I said that I would?"

"No." She drew herself up. "Well, I shall thy. I love you, James. You may "Thank you, dear. I am satisfied. leave me here feeling very sure of

"I have loved you. There was never bottom-in a rough crucible, it's true, in this world anything like the love I

"Enough!" she cried out sharply. "I So there! Don't feel sorry for me. I was playing at love then. Now I love shall end my virtuous days in peace, in earnest. You've never known love but I shall never sit-by-the-fire, my such as I can really give. I know you dear. Tomorrow you will go away, all well, too. You love nobly-and withof you, I shall have the supreme joy out end. Of late I have come to beof knowing that not one of you will lieve that Matilde could have won out ever forget me or my deeds, good and against your-your folly if she had bad. Who knows! I am still young, been stronger, less conscious of the you know. Time has the chance to be pain she felt. If she had stood her ground-here, against you, you would That last observation lingered in have been conquered. But she did not Lydia's mind. Hours afterward she have the strength to stand and fight as I would have fought. Today I love my sister none the less, but I no longer fight to avenge her wrongs. I am here to fight for myself. You may go away thinking that I am a traitor to her, but you will take with you the conviction that I am honest, and that sweet, and as fair as a blue sky could is the foundation for my claim against you."

"I know you are not a traitor to her the unclouded sky. There are shadows cause. You are its lifelong supporter. below that claim the vision and the You have done more for Matilde than-'

"Than Matilde could have done for herself? Isn't that true? I have forced you to confess that you loved her for twenty-five years with all your soul. I have done my duty for her. Now I



"Everything Has Turned Out as Should."

count. Some day we shall meet again and-well, it will not be disloyalty to Matilde that moves you to say that you love me. I shall not stay out of proach of the new mistress of the your life forever. It is your destiny and mine, James. We are mortals, fiesh and blood mortals, and we have been a great deal to each other."

He was silent for a long time. When at last he spoke his voice was full of gentleness. "I do not love you, Yvonne. I cannot allow you to look forward to the the happy ending that you picture so vividly in your imagination. You say that you love me. I shall give you the opportunity to prove it to yourself if not to me. When I came back to you a moment ago it was to tell you that I expect you to be here in this house when I return in a year-perhaps two years. I came back to put it to you as a command. You are more than my wife. You are my prisoner. You are to pay a penalty as any convicted wrong-doer would pay if condemned by law. I order )ou, Therese, to remain in this house until I come to set you free."

She stared at him for a moment and then an odd smile came into her eyes. "A prisoner serving her time? Is that it, my husband?"

"If you are here when I return ! shall have reason to believe that your love is real, that it is good and true and enduring. I am afraid of you now. I do not trust you."

Her eyes fiashed ominously. She started to say something, but refrained, "That doesn't prove that they're not closing her lips tightly. "You used the word prisoner," Brood

resumed levelly. "Of course you understand that it is voluntary on your eyes.

"For a year-or a year and a half. graph or write or do something. Dan. by Charles I in 1842.

"Within these four walls," said he. She's never had a line from him. and his face was very white. "Is that your sentence?"

"Call it that if you like, Therese." head. "My keepers? Who are they no attention to it. It certainly beats to be? The old men of the sea-" "Your keeper will be the thing you

call Love," said he. "Do you expect me to submit to

this-

He held up his hand. "I expect you to remain here until I return, Therese. valid-or afraid of detectives or some-I did not intend to impose this condi- thing like that. God knows she ain't tion upon you by word of mouth. I now tell you what I intend to do-and was going away without a word, but one. Rain or shine, winter or summer you would have received from Mr. she walks up and down that courtyard Dawes a sealed envelope as soon as of course, but now that you know the one, she's so fresh and bright-eyed in contents it will not be necesary to-" "And when you do come back am

The wicked enchantress has been the rest of my life. I am not telling I to hope for something more than Riggs: she has been uncommonly deyour pardon and a release?" she cried, with fine irony in her voice.

"I will not promise anything," said he, slowly.

She drew a long breath and there was the light of triumph in her eyes. Laying her slim hand on his arm, she said: "I am content, James, I am sure of you now. You will find me here into the air. "Don't you ever say anywhen you choose to come back, be it in one year or twenty. Now go, my man! They are waiting for you. Be kind to them, poor souls, and tell them ond." all that you have just told me. It will make them happy. They love me, you

"Yes, they do love you," said he, putting his hands upon her shoulders. They smiled into each other's eyes "Good-by, Therese. 1 will return."

"Good-by, James. No, do not kiss me. It would be mockery. Good luck and-God speed you home again." Their hands met in a warm, firm clasp. "I will go with you as far as the door of my prison."

From the open door she smiled out upon the young people in the motor farewell. Then she closed the door and walked slowly down the hallway to the big library. She was alone in the house save for the servants. The tled for years till now. I-" old men had preceded the voyagers to the pier. Standing in the center of the room, she surveyed this particular ing to affect an unconcerned examinacell in her prison with a sort of calm dirdain.

"He has taken the only way to conquer himself," she mused, half aloud. 'He is a wise man-a very wise man might have expected this of him." She pulled the bell cord, and Jones, who had just re-entered the house, came at once to the room.

"Yes, madam." "When Mr. Dawes and Mr. Riggs re- dash for the long-neglected envelope. turn from the ship, tell them that I Mr. Dawes, being fat and aggressive, with me. That's all, thank you."

"Yes, madam."

"By the way, Jones, you may always set the table for three.' Jones blinked. It was a most unusual order. He had been trying to screw up his courage to inquire what

his mistress' plans were for the immediate future-whether she intended to travel should he dismiss the servants, would she spend the heated term in the mountains, etc., etc. He, as well as the rest of the servants, wondered why the master's wife had been left behind. Her instructions, therefore, to lay three places at the table took him completely by surprise-"knocked the breath out of him," as he expressed it to the cook a few minutes later. She had never been known to take a meal with the garrulous old men. They bored her to distraction. according to Celeste. And now he was to lay places for them-always! It was most extrordernary!

A cold, blustery night in January, six months after the beginning of Yvonne's voluntary servitude in the prison to which her husband had committed her. In the big library, before a roaring fire sat the two old men. very much as they had sat on the December night that heralded the aphouse of Brood, except that on this occasion they were eminently sober. On the corner of the table lay a long, yellow envelope-a cablegram ad-

dressed to Mrs. James Brood. "It's been here for two hours and she don't even think of opening it to see what's inside," complained Mr. Riggs, but entirely without reproach. "It's her business, Joe," said Mr.

Dawes, pulling hard at his cigar, "Maybe some one's dead," said Mr. Riggs, dolorously.

"Like as not," said his friend, "but what of it?"

"What of it, you infernal-but, excuse me, Danbury, I won't say it. It's against the rules, God bless 'em. But I will say that if anybody else had asked that question I'd say he was a blithering, unnatural fool. If anybody's dead, she ought to know it." "But supposing nobody is dead," protested Mr. Dawes.

"There's no use arguing with you. "She'll read it when she gets good and ready. At present she prefers to read the letters that just come from Freddy and Lyddy. What's a cable

gram compared to the kind of letters they write? Answer me, Joe." "Foolish questions like that-" "Haven't you had letters from them ! You've been tickled to death over their happiness and their prospects and-"

dead or dying or in trouble or-" "Maybe it's from Jim," said his friend, a wistful look in his blear old

"I-I hope it is, by gee!" exclaimed the other, and then they got up and went over to examine the envelope

Maybe this is something at last."

"What puzzles me is that she always seems disappointed when there's noth-"Do you mean that I am not to ing in the post from him, and here's put foot outside of these premises?" a cablegram that might be the very she asked, wide-eyed. He nodded his thing she's looking for and she pays

me. "You know what puzzles me more than anything else? I've said it a hundred times. She never goes outside this house-except in the garden-day or night. You'd think she was an ina sick woman. I never saw a healthier till you'd think she'd wear a path in the morning."

"Well, I've got this to say, Joe cent to you after the way you used to treat her when she first came here. She's made you feel everlastingly ashamed of your idiotic behavior-"

"I beg your pardon, Danbury," exclaimed Mr. Riggs, striking the table with his bony knuckles so violently that the books and magazines bounced thing like that again to me. It's against the rules for me to call you a scoundrelly liar or I'd do it in a sec-

"For your sake, sir, I'm glad it's against the rules," said Mr. Dawes, flercely. "I'm mighty glad."

Mr. Riggs allowed a sheepish grin to steal over his wrinkled visage. "I apologize, Danbury."

"And so do I," said his friend, whereupon they shook hands with great cordiality-as they did at least a dozen times a day since the beginning of the new regime.

"She's the finest, loveliest woman on

earth," said Mr. Riggs. "I never knew I could be so happy as I've been during the past six and waved her handkerchief in gay months. Why, this house is like a bird cage filled with canaries. I sometimes feel like singing my head offand as for whistling! I haven't whis-

> "Sh!" hissed Mr. Riggs, suddenly backing away from the table and trytion of a worn spot in the rug.

> Mrs. Brood was descending the stairs, lightly, eagerly. In another instant she entered the room. "How nice the fire looks," she cried,

> crossing the room. Never had she been more radiantly, seductively beautiful than at this very instant. "My cablegram—where is it?" The old men made a simultaneous

> it in his eager fingers. "Better read it, Mrs. Brood," he

> panted, thrusting it into her hand. "Maybe it's bad news." She regarded him with one of her most mysterious smiles. "No, my friend, it is not bad news. It is good

> news. It is from my husband." "But you haven't read it," gasped

Mr. Riggs. "Ah, but I know, just the same." She deliberately slit the envelope with a slim finger and held it out to them.

"Read it if you like." They solemnly shook their heads, too amazed for words. She unfolded the sheet and sent her eyes swiftly over the printed contents. Then, to their further stupefaction she pressed the bit of paper to her red lips. Her eyes flashed like diamonds,

"Listen! Here is what it says: 'Come by the first steamer. I want you to come to me, Therese.' And see! It is signed 'Your husband.' "Hurray!" shouted the two old men

"But," she said, shaking her head slowly, "I shall not obey," "What! You-you won't go?" gasped Mr. Riggs.

umph in her voice. She suddenly clapped her hands to her breast and uttered a long, deep sigh of joy. "No, I shall not go to him." The old men stared belplessly while she sank luxuriously into a chair and stuck her little feet out to the fire.

"No!" she cried, the ring of tri-

der the weight of their suddenly inert "But, Mrs. Brood, he wants you!" came almost in a groan from the line

They felt their knees grow weak un-

of Mr. Riggs. She lighted a cigarette. "If he wants me, Mr. Riggs, let him come and get me," she said sending a long cloud of smoke toward the celling as she lay back in the chair and crossed her feet in absolute, utter contentment. "He will come, my dear old friendsoh, I am sure that he will come.

"You-you don't know him, Mrs. Brood," lamented Mr. Dawes. He's made of steel, He-"

"He will come and unlock the door. Mr. Dawes," said she, serenely. "He is also made of flesh and blood. The steel you speak of was in his heart. It has been withdrawn at last. My friends, he will come and get me very soon.

Ring for Jones, please." "Wha-what are you going to do?" Mr. Dawes had the temerity to ask.

"Send a cablegram to my husband saying-" She paused to smile at the fiaming logs, a sweet, rapturous smile that neither of the old men could comprehend.

"Saying-what?" demanded Mr. Riggs, anxiously. "That I cannot come to him," she said, as she stretched out her arms

toward the east. THE END.

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